Art · DUBU(REDICE STUDIO)
Original Novel · Chugong
Story · h-goon

34

WHOEVER FIGHTS MONSTERS...

...SHOULD SEE TO IT THAT IN THE PROCESS HE DOES NOT BECOME A MONSTER.

IF YOU GAZE LONG ENOUGH INTO AN ABYSS,

THE ABYSS...

...WILL GAZE BACK INTO YOU.

-FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

HUNTERS HAVE WITNESSED COUNTLESS DEATHS, AND HAVE TAKEN MANY LIVES.

BECAUSE WE STRADDLE THE LINE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, WE NOT ONLY FIGHT AGAINST MAGIC BEASTS, BUT OTHER HUMANS AS WELL.

WE HAVE BECOME EXTRAORDINARY "KILLING MACHINES."

YOU'RE NO DIFFERENT.

WE FACE DEATH ON THE DAILY, SO DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE LUMPING US HUNTERS TOGETHER WITH ORDINARY HUMANS.

ANYWAY...

...I'VE LOST, SO I'LL DIE.
IT'S THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS.

...LET ME JUST ASK YOU ONE LAST THING.
WHAT'S YOUR DEAL?
AN ASSASSIN CLASS HUNTER WITH HEALING ABILITIES...
AND TO TOP IT OFF, YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO DEBUFF YOUR OPPONENTS. I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING.

WELL, I'D LIKE TO KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT, TOO.

HAA
HAA
A GUY LIKE ME WHO TALKS TOO MUCH MAY SEEM PATHETIC TO YOU, BUT...
SOMEONE WITH TOO MANY SECRETS ISN'T ALL THAT GREAT EITHER.

TWITCH
KEGH!
[EFFECT: PARALYZE HAS BEEN ACTIVATED.]
[EFFECT: BLEED HAS BEEN ACTIVATED.]

NOW THAT YOU'VE KILLED ME, YOU WON'T BE able TO HIDE YOUR TRUE RANK.

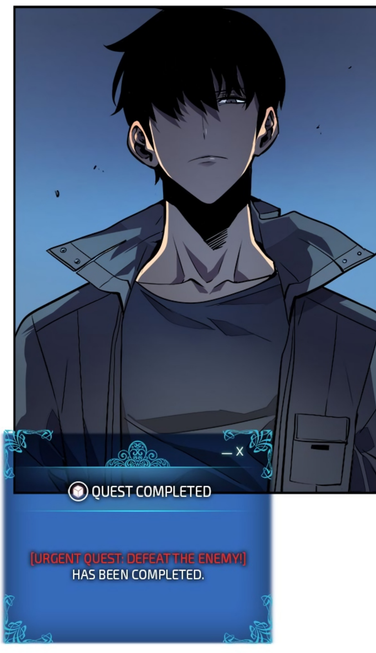
...

LET'S SAY I'M A HUNTER THAT IMPROVES WITH EVERY BATTLE.
HOW MUCH STRONGER DO YOU THINK I'LL GET?

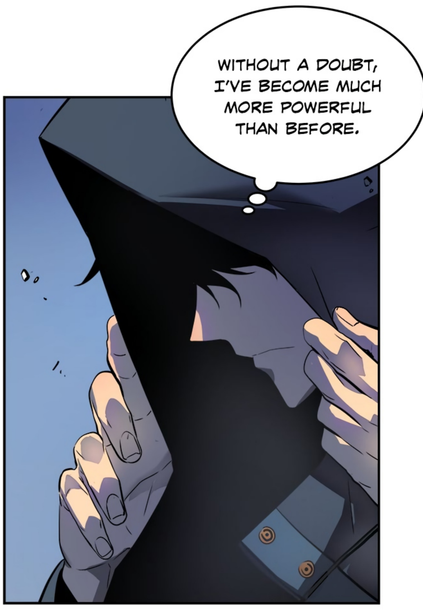
HA...

YOUR SHADOW...
...HAS BECOME ONE WITH DARKNESS.

AS DEEP AS DARKNESS...
DROOP
THAT'S HOW STRONG YOU'LL BECOME.


QUEST COMPLETED
[URGENT QUEST: DEFEAT THE ENEMY!]
HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

QUEST REWARD
SELECT YOUR REWARD.
CHOOSE A REWARD FROM THE LIST BELOW.
REWARD 1. ABILITY POINTS +5
ACCEPT YOUR REWARD?
ACCEPT
DECLINE

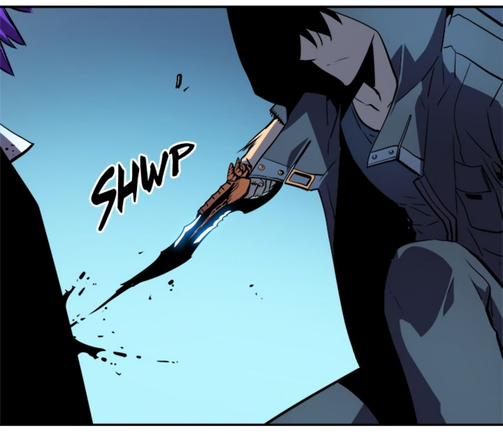

WITHOUT A DOUBT, I'VE BECOME MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN BEFORE.

BUT FOR SOME REASON...

...I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS DESTROYED INSIDE OF ME EVERYTIME I GET STRONGER.

THANKS, SUNG.
IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, WE'D BOTH BE DEAD BY NOW.
NOW, WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THIS MESS...
WOULDN'T IT BE BEST TO LEAVE THIS DUNGEON AND REPORT EVERYTHING TO THE ASSOCIATION?
WE NEED TO CLOSE THE DUNGEON FIRST.
SUNG, ARE YOU PLANNING ON FIGHTING THE BOSS ON YOUR OWN...?!
...WELL, NOW THAT I'VE SEEN YOUR SKILLS, I WON'T STOP YOU.

I DO WISH WE COULD GIVE ALL THESE GUYS A PROPER FUNERAL...
HOW UNFORTUNATE.


SHWP

GLOW

NOTICE
-YOU HAVE OBTAINED [RUNE STONE: CAMOUFLAGE].

[RUNE STONE: CAMOUFLAGE]
TYPE: RUNE STONE
BREAKING THIS RUNE STONE WILL GRANT YOU A SKILL.
I CAN OBTAIN THE SKILL THAT GUY WAS USING?

SUNG, JOOHEE AND I WILL HEAD OUT FIRST AND CONTACT THE ASSOCIATION.
WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU OUTSIDE. PLEASE BE QUICK.

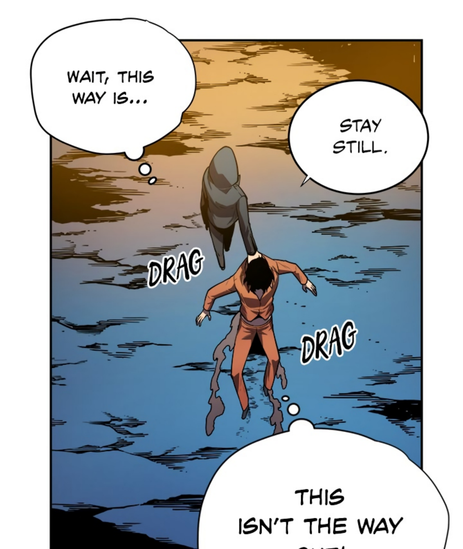
I WON'T TAKE LONG.

I KNOW YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.
GET UP.

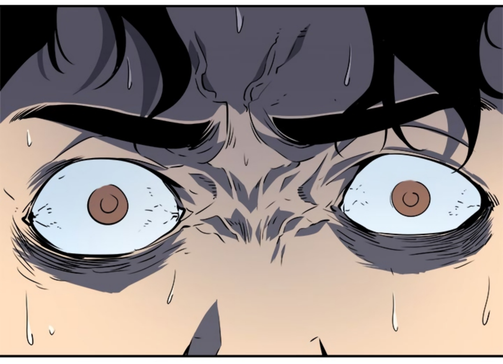
WHY DID YOU PRETEND TO BE DEAD?
WERE YOU TRYING TO SECRETLY ESCAPE?

ARE YOU NOT ABLE TO TALK?
MAN, THAT WAS BRUTAL OF KANG TAESHIK.
HE WAS SHREWD ENOUGH TO CUT YOUR VOCAL CHORDS.
AH
AGH
AFTER MAKING YOU UNABLE TO SCREAM, HE PROBABLY WANTED TO KILL YOU IN THE MOST PAINFUL WAY POSSIBLE.

AT THIS RATE, YOU'LL DIE OF BLOOD LOSS.
YOU COULD SURVIVE IF I GET JOOHEE TO HEAL YOU.
I'M... BEING SPARED.


WAIT, THIS WAY IS...
STAY STILL.
DRAG
DRAG
THIS ISN'T THE WAY

out!

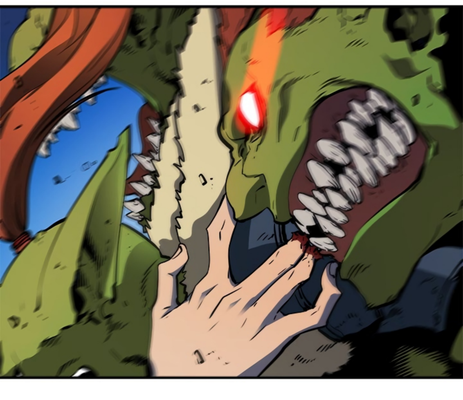


TH...THIS PLACE IS!

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FACES OF THE VICTIMS YOU RAPED?

YOU'RE EVEN MORE OF A SCUMBAG THAN KANG TAESHIK.
THERE'S NO WAY I WOULD LET YOU LEAVE THIS DUNGEON.

TREMBLE
TREMBLE

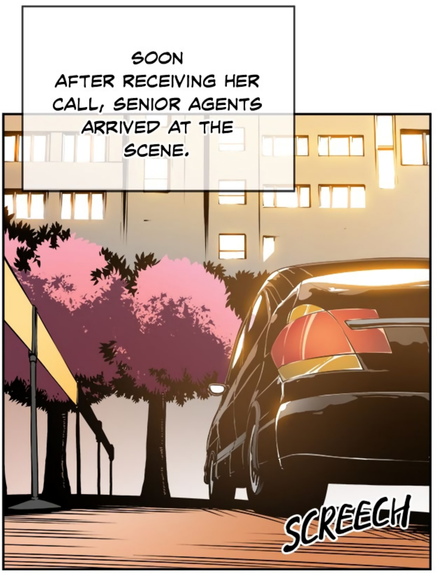


A SILENT SCREAM
ECHOED THROUGHOUT
THE DUNGEON...

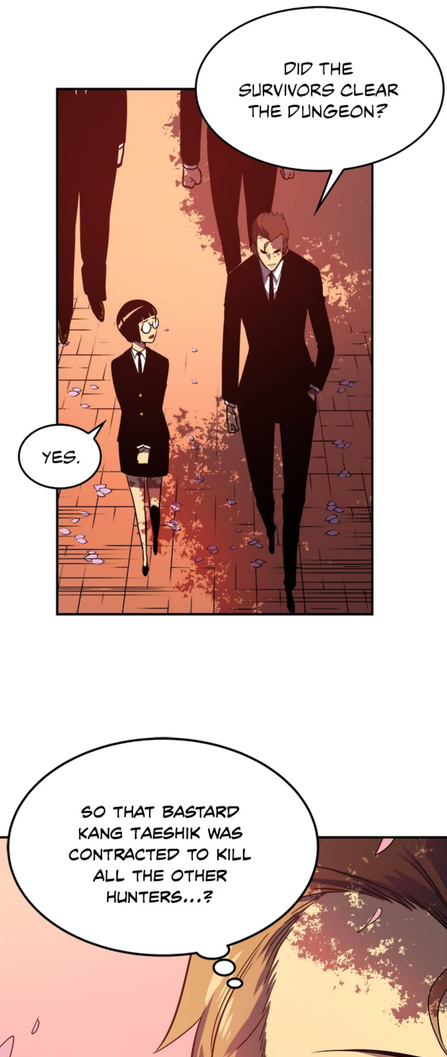
After that, defeating the hobgoblin boss wasn't much of a challenge.

Mr. Song and Joohee left the dungeon first to tell the surveillance agent about what had happened.

When she realized that there had been a major accident, she immediately notified the higher-ups.


SOON AFTER RECEIVING HER CALL, SENIOR AGENTS ARRIVED AT THE SCENE.
SCREECH

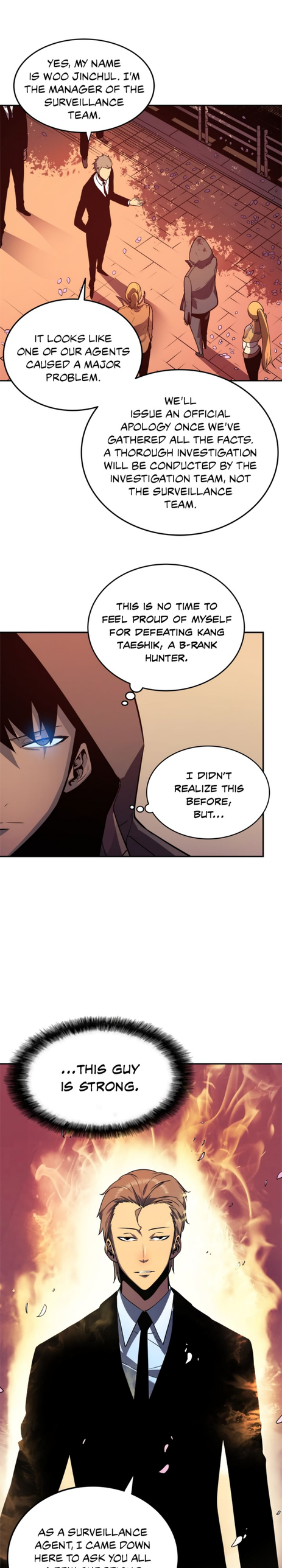
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE THE DUNGEON WAS CLEARED?
ABOUT 40 MINUTES, SIR.
THAT MEANS THERE'S ONLY 20 MINUTES LEFT. SEEMS WE GOT HERE TOO LATE.
WE'LL ATTEMPT TO RETRIEVE THE BODIES WITHIN EIGHT MINUTES. IF WE FAIL, WE'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP AND LEAVE THE DUNGEON.


DID THE SURVIVORS CLEAR THE DUNGEON?
YES.

SO THAT BASTARD KANG TAESHIK WAS CONTRACTED TO KILL ALL THE OTHER HUNTERS...?
IF WHAT WE'VE BEEN TOLD IS TRUE, THEN THE HUNTERS WOULD'VE TRIED TO LEAVE BEHIND THE DEAD BODIES. BUT INSTEAD, THEY PURPOSEFULLY SEALED OFF THE DUNGEON.
THAT MEANS THEY HAD SOMETHING TO HIDE.

HUNTER SUNG JINWOO?

IS HE THE SAME PERSON I MET BEFORE?
HE'S CHANGED SO MUCH.
MR. SUNG, WE MEET AGAIN.
AH, YOU'RE THAT SURVEILLANCE AGENT...

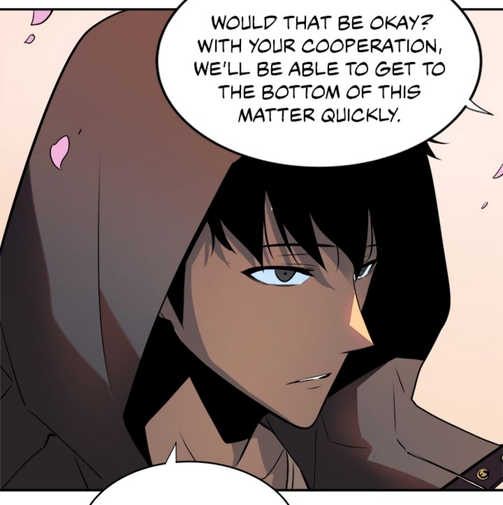

YES, MY NAME IS WOO JINCHUL. I'M THE MANAGER OF THE SURVEILLANCE TEAM.
IT LOOKS LIKE ONE OF OUR AGENTS CAUSED A MAJOR PROBLEM.
WE'LL ISSUE AN OFFICIAL APOLOGY ONCE WE'VE GATHERED ALL THE FACTS. A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE INVESTIGATION TEAM, NOT THE SURVEILLANCE TEAM.
THIS IS NO TIME TO FEEL PROUD OF MYSELF FOR DEFEATING KANG TAESHIK, A B-RANK HUNTER.
I DIDN'T REALIZE THIS BEFORE, BUT...
...THIS GUY IS STRONG.
AS A SURVEILLANCE AGENT, I CAME DOWN HERE TO ASK YOU ALL

A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.

HE'S IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN!

THIS GUY IS A-RANK!

AT MY CURRENT LEVEL, I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST HIM.



YES, WE'LL COOPERATE.

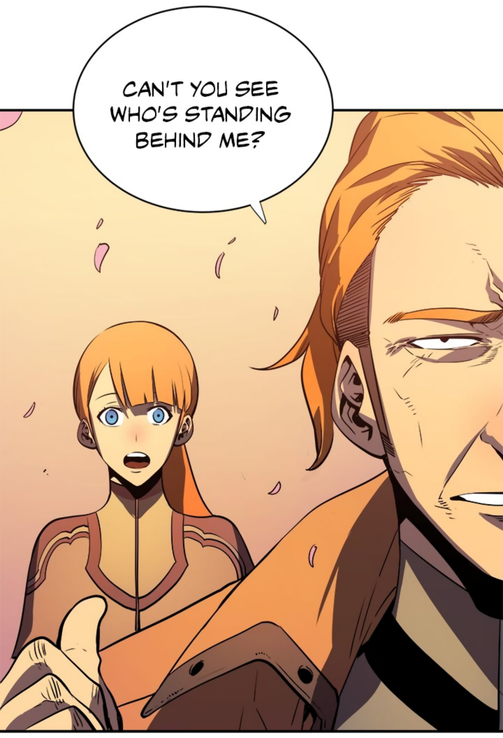
THEN LET ME BE STRAIGHTFORWARD.

WHO KILLED THE B-RANK HUNTER, KANG TAESHIK?

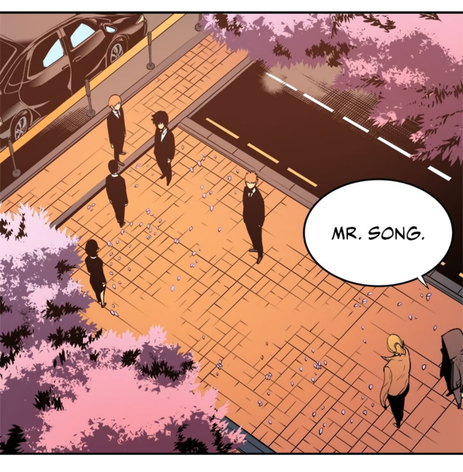
I CAN'T HIDE THE FACT THAT I'VE REAWAKENED ANY LONGER.
IT'S A SHAME, BUT LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO FORGET ABOUT THE DEAL I MADE WITH JINHO...
...SINCE HE WANTS A SKILLED HUNTER WITH A LOW RANK.

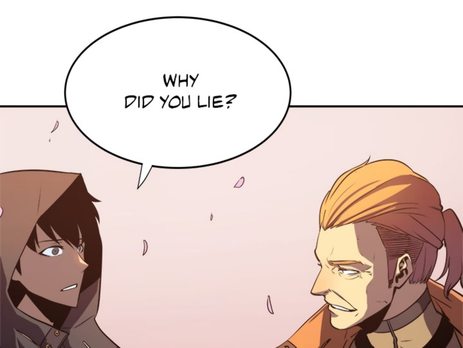
IT WAS ME.

I'M THE ONE WHO KILLED KANG TAESHIK.
PARDON ME FOR ASKING, BUT WHAT IS YOUR RANK, SIR?
I'M C-RANK.
HOW DID A C-RANK HUNTER LIKE YOU DEFEAT A B-RANK HUNTER...?


CAN'T YOU SEE WHO'S STANDING BEHIND ME?

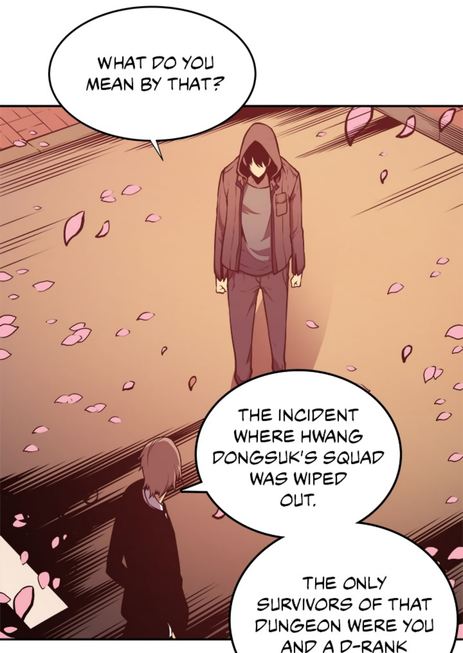
I SUPPOSE YOU COULD'VE BEATEN A B-RANK HUNTER IF YOU HAD SUPPORT.
HOWEVER, KANG TAESHIK... WAS AN ENIGMA TO ALL OF US ON THE SURVEILLANCE TEAM AS WELL.
COMPARED TO OTHER B-RANK HUNTERS, HIS SKILLS WERE EXCEPTIONAL. IS A C-RANK HUNTER WITH A MISSING ARM REALLY CAPABLE OF BEATING A GUY LIKE THAT?
ANYWAY, PLEASE COME WITH US. YOU'LL BE HELPING US WRITE UP A REPORT ON THIS CASE.


MR. SONG.


WHY DID YOU LIE?

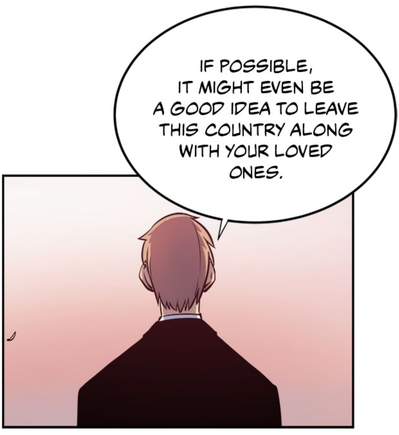
SUNG, I TRUST THAT YOU HAVE YOUR REASONS FOR HIDING YOUR TRUE STRENGTH.
SHOULD I NOT HAVE LIED?
EITHER WAY, THE INVESTIGATION CAN'T BE AVOIDED.
THIS PROBABLY ISN'T ENOUGH TO REPAY YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE, BUT IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO.
MR. SUNG JINWOO.

I HIGHLY DOUBT AN E-RANKER LIKE YOU WAS ABLE TO DEFEAT A B-RANK HUNTER LIKE KANG TAESHIK...
...BECAUSE I DON'T THINK IT'S HELPFUL TO SUSPECT YOU AGAIN OF REAWAKENING.
HOWEVER, I'M JUST LETTING YOU KNOW...
SINCE YOU WON'T LAST LONG IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
THE INCIDENT WHERE HWANG DONGSUK'S SQUAD WAS WIPED OUT.
THE ONLY SURVIVORS OF THAT DUNGEON WERE YOU AND A D-RANK HUNTER.
BUT THE PROBLEM IS, HWANG DONGSUK'S YOUNGER BROTHER IS THE HUNTER, HWANG DONGSOO. CHANCES ARE, YOU TWO NOW HAVE A TARGET ON YOUR BACKS.

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT S-RANK HUNTER, HWANG DONGSOO?

YES.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED.
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU, MR. SUNG, WERE ABLE TO MAKE IT OUT OF THERE ALIVE.
WE CANNOT ENFORCE THE LAW ON S-RANK HUNTERS.
THEY ARE BOTH MIRACULOUS AND CATASTROPHIC BEINGS.
I SUGGEST YOU LAY LOW...



STATS

NAME: SUNG JINWOO LEVEL: 27
JOB: NONE FATIGUE: 0
TITLE: WOLF ASSASSIN

HP: 5114

MP: 548

STRENGTH: 72 HEALTH: 43
AGILITY: 82 INTELLIGENCE: 39
SENSE: 69

PHYSICAL DAMAGE REDUCTION: 20% ACTIVATED

AVAILABLE ABILITY POINTS: 5

SKILLS

[PASSIVE]

(UNKNOWN) MAX

TENACITY LV. 1

[ACTIVE]

SPEED LV. 1

BLOODLUST LV. 1

[ITEM: WARDEN'S NECKLACE]
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: A
TYPE: NECKLACE
EQUIPPED
AGILITY +20, SENSE +20

THREE HOURS LATER, DURING THE INVESTIGATION INTO KANG TAESHIK'S MURDER-FOR-HIRE CASE...

...THE CEO OF GEUMGANG INDUSTRIES TURNED HIMSELF IN AND OUR ACTIONS WERE DEEMED AS SELF-DEFENSE.

JINWOO.

GROAN

DO YOU REMEMBER THIS?

To Be Continued...

D&C WEBTOON

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Editor: Michelle Kim